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Commission on the Status of Women
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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Rotary International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.6/2002/1.

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For many women in poverty around the world, each day is a struggle for survival. Basic education is a luxury and many women are forced to use whatever means possible to feed their families. Numerous women suffer from violence in and outside their homes and many women also lack essential healthcare.

Rotary's Service to Women

The Rotary International Board of Directors has adopted a statement on the position and needs of women. Rotary recognizes that the status of women is inherently related to the security of families and that improving the status of women will benefit all communities.

Rotary encourages members to develop projects that address the needs of women who are living in poverty by providing women with access to education, healthcare, as well as economic and social development in their communities.

Rotary clubs and districts initiate projects that benefit poverty stricken women by offering vocational training, prenatal care, revolving loan funds, and basic health services.

The following project examples can be adapted to benefit women around the world.

Health Issues

India The Rotaract Club of Ootacamund organized a workshop educating local medical personnel on practices to keep women safe during childbirth. The workshop also provided health safety tips for children and adolescents. Eminent medical experts involved in this conference included representatives from UNICEF.

Domestic Issues

Canada The Rotary Club of Charlottetown Royalty has created a scholarship for those women living in an emergency shelter for battered women. The scholarship pays education expenses and also assists women in establishing a new and independent life.

Education and Vocational Training

United States The Rotary Club of Syracuse, New York sponsored a family literacy camp. Fourteen inner-city mothers attended literacy classes and workshops on self-esteem. Rotary club members also assisted in operating the camp.

Economic Sustainable Development

Bangladesh The Rotary Clubs of Dhaka Buriganga and Richmond have established a micro-credit program for 160 destitute women living in the slum areas of Dhaka. The women invest their loan funds in diverse enterprises, such as shoe shops, sari sales, and grocery shops. These loans allow for women to attain financial independence.

Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide who provide humanitarian service, and help to build goodwill and peace in the world. There are approximately 1.2 million Rotarians who are members of more than 30,462 Rotary clubs in 162 countries.